3.6 LAND USE AND RECREATION

This section addresses the potential for impacts to onshore land uses at the Port of Long Beach (POLB), which is proposed for offloading and/or beneficial reuse of shell mound dredge materials. Disposal of shell mound materials and caisson debris at an approved recycling facility or one or more permitted landfills is not expected to result in any land use impacts and is not further analyzed. This section also addresses impacts to offshore recreational resources, including recreational boating and other water-dependent recreational activities, such as whale watching and diving, in the vicinity of the shell mound sites. Offshore recreational fishing is addressed in Section 3.5. Offshore transportation is discussed in Section 3.7. Onshore recreational resources at the POLB would not be affected and are not discussed further. Project consistency with adopted plans and policies is addressed in Chapter 5, and significant impacts due to inconsistencies with such plans and policies are summarized below.

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

3.6.1.1 Shell Mound Sites

The 4H shell mound sites are located between 1.5 and 2.6 nautical miles (nm) offshore. The closest small boat marina is located in Santa Barbara, approximately 5 miles west of Platform Hilda. The nearest small boat harbors are at Santa Barbara (4.5 to 9.2 nautical miles [nm] distant) and Ventura (14 nm distant). Both support full-service marinas offering fishing and diving charters, whale watching and island cruises, and public boat ramps. Ventura Harbor is the gateway to the Channel Islands National Park, with one or more boats departing for the islands, depending on the season. Additionally, Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard, 6.8 nm southeast of Ventura Harbor, provides transport to the Channel Islands, sport and commercial fishing dock space, and 11 marinas and yacht clubs. Recreational boaters periodically traverse the general area surrounding the shell mounds; however, because of the distance from the nearest harbor, the area does not support a heavy concentration of boating activity.

The shell mounds are not used for commercial or recreational fishing (see Section 3.5) or recreational diving. The depth of the shell mounds limits their accessibility to diving, and they consist of mud and shells that do not support a productive or diverse biological community (Section 3.3) that would be attractive to divers.

Whale watching excursions leave from Santa Barbara Harbor year-round and traverse the coastal waters in the general area, but as discussed in detail in Section 3.4, whales are not commonly seen in the vicinity of the shell mounds, and the abundance of whales is much greater farther offshore and at the Channel Islands. Trips to Channel Islands National Park are regularly conducted from Channel Islands Harbor between December and March (during gray whale migration) and periodically during summer (for blue and humpback whales in the western part of the channel). The shell mounds area is not a whale watching destination.

3.6.1.2 Transit Routes

The transit routes that would be used by vessels to access the shell mound sites and transport dredged material to disposal sites are described in Section 3.7. These routes are periodically traversed by recreational boaters. Depending on which actions are implemented, supporting vessels may travel between the shell mounds sites and Casitas Pier or local harbors, but this is not expected to have any effect on local land use or harbor operations.

3.6.1.3 Onshore Land Uses

The POLB contains a variety of land uses. The primary land uses are port-supporting and include ship loading and unloading facilities, warehouses, open storage and transfer areas for cargo, intermodal rail facilities, and other ancillary facilities. The Port also contains land used for oil and gas production and light industry. Commercial and recreational facilities are predominantly located in the Queensbay area and include facilities for charters, cruises, sportfishing, and small-craft boating in Queensway Bay. Charter boat companies provide passenger and charter service to Catalina Island and also serve specialized activities such as sportfishing, scuba diving, and whale watching. Fishing and scuba diving are conducted at various locations throughout the harbor, primarily near the Long Beach breakwater and along the Long Beach shoreline. The harbor also contains several marinas and public launch ramps. The waters of the outer harbor are regularly used for day sailing, powerboat cruising, and sailing regattas.

3.6.2 Regulatory Setting

The U.S. Coast Guard's Navigation Rules (International-Inland) are mandatory for all vessels in order to prevent collisions and enhance safety. These include, but are not limited to, requirements that all vessels maintain a proper lookout at all times and proceed at a safe speed, taking into account visibility, traffic density, vessel maneuverability, state of the wind, sea, current, and proximity of navigational hazards. The Navigation Rules also provide specific guidance regarding rights-of-way, maneuvering vessels to avoid collision, and navigation requirements in narrow channels. Additionally, they establish lighting requirements for vessels engaged in dredging or underwater operations and towing operations.

Land and water uses in the POLB are subject to the provisions of the Port Master Plan (POLB 1999b). This master plan was developed in conformance with the California Coastal Act and other federal, State, and city land use policies, and serves as the Local Coastal Plan for the Port.

3.6.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria listed below are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A Program Alternative would have a significant impact on land use and recreation if it would:

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan.

With regard to recreation, the CEQA significance determination guidelines ask if a proposed project would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that may result in adverse physical effects on the environment. These criteria are not applicable to the proposed actions, since neither a population increase nor any other conditions resulting in increased demand for recreational facilities would result from their implementation. Therefore, the following significance threshold is used for assessing potential impacts to recreation:

- A significant impact on recreation would occur if the action would result in substantial loss or diminished quality of recreational, educational, or visitor-oriented opportunities, facilities, or resources, or lead to increased use of, or other physical changes to, recreational opportunities, facilities, or resources.

3.6.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

3.6.4.1 Program Alternative 1 (PA1): Shell Mounds and Caisson Removal and Disposal

Impact – Land Use

Offshore dredging and caisson removal activities would not adversely affect onshore land uses.

Transport and disposal of dredged materials and caissons at the existing LA-2 ocean disposal site, an existing onshore landfill, or a recycling facility would not physically divide an established community, nor would it conflict with established plans, policies, or regulations (refer to Chapter 5). Transport and disposal would not affect habitat conservation plans or natural communities conservation plans, as none have been established in the vicinity of the 4H shell mounds or proposed disposal sites.

In the event that dredged material is disposed of at the POLB, it would be used as construction fill for an as-yet undetermined project. Construction projects at the Port are required to undergo environmental review, whereby any associated land use impacts are identified and mitigation measures are identified as needed. These would not be the responsibility of the shell mounds program, which would only supply fill material for the project. Accordingly, the disposal of dredged material at the POLB would not result

in adverse land use impacts. Likewise, the transfer of dredged material and caissons from barges to trucks at the POLB for disposal at an appropriate facility would have no impact on land use, since existing facilities would be used.

Finally, the provision of support services from Casitas Pier, or local harbors (diving support, etc.) would not contribute appreciably to local marine traffic and would not, therefore, affect recreational boating or other recreational activities in the vicinity of the Port or shell mound sites.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

Impact – Recreation

PA1 would require the use of dredges and other heavy equipment. Dredging of the shell mounds and cutting of caissons would have no adverse impact on recreational activities, since the relatively small work area affected would be easily avoided and other ocean-based recreational boating opportunities are widely available. The work area would be clearly marked and access restricted for recreational boaters; additionally, information regarding the proposed action would be published in the *Local Notice to Mariners* (see Section 3.7.2.1 for additional detail).

A temporary 3,000-foot hazard zone would be established surrounding the shell mound sites for the duration of detonation activities necessary for caisson removal. This zone would not encroach upon routes traversed by commercial whale watching excursions, nor extend into the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Implementation of this PA would have no impact on recreational whale watching activities.

The transport of equipment to the work area and of dredged material by barge would have no adverse impact on recreational boating, since the relatively small area affected would be easily avoided and other ocean-based recreational boating opportunities are widely available. For the same reasons, the disposal of dredged material at LA-2 would have no adverse impacts on recreational boating. Since recreational diving does not occur at the shell mound sites or in the immediate area, implementation of PA1 would not affect diving activities.

Disposal of dredged material and caissons at the POLB would not adversely impact recreational uses. The number of barge trips required to transport the dredged material to the Port (a maximum of 13, as discussed in Section 3.7.3.1) would constitute a negligible percentage of the annual vessel calls (over 3,000) at the Port (POLB 2002) and standard safety procedures would be followed; thus, recreational boating would be able to continue unimpeded. As noted above, if the dredged material were disposed of at the Port, it would be used as fill for an as-yet undetermined construction project; any associated impacts on recreational uses would be evaluated in separate environmental documentation.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.2 Program Alternative 2 (PA2): Leveling and Spreading of Shell Mounds with Caissons Removal and Disposal

Impact – Land Use

As under PA1, the majority of activities associated with in-place leveling and spreading of shell mounds would occur offshore, with the exception of transport and disposal of caisson debris in an approved recycling facility or one or more permitted landfills. Accordingly, similar to PA1, PA2 would have no impacts on land use.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

Impact – Recreation

PA2 would have the same operating parameters as PA1 (i.e., the same vessels operating in the same area), and impacts would be similar. The reduced duration of activities (7 days versus 12) would further reduce potential for conflicts with recreational boating. As under PA1, PA2 would result in less than significant impacts on recreational resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.3 Program Alternative 3 (PA3): Capping

Impact – Land Use

Capping the shell mounds and caissons in place would occur entirely offshore and would have no impact on onshore land uses.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

Impact – Recreation

In-place capping would have similar operating parameters as those identified under PA1 (i.e., the same vessels operating in the same area), although it would require an increased number or barge trips to transport clean cap sediment to the shell mound sites (between 284 and 664 depending on cap slope, compared to 13 trips for shell mounds and caisson removal). The number of barge trips is not, however, expected to

disrupt commercial or recreational boating or other recreational activities, and impacts to recreation would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.4 Program Alternative 4 (PA4): Artificial Reefs at all Four Shell Mounds

Impact – Land Use

Activities associated with PA4 would occur entirely offshore and would have no impact on onshore land uses.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

Impact – Recreation

Modification of the shell mounds to create artificial reefs would require up to 7 barge trips to transport quarry rock from Santa Catalina Island to the shell mound sites, compared to 13 trips for dredging under PA1 and 284 to 664 trips for capping under PA2. Other operational parameters would be similar to those identified under PA2, including the type of vessels required at the mound sites, although for a slightly longer duration (16 days compared to 12). Impacts on recreational activities would similarly be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.5 Program Alternative 5 (PA5): Artificial Reef at Hazel after Removing (5a) or Spreading (5b) Shell Mounds

Program Alternative 5a (PA5a): Artificial Reef at Hazel Site plus Removal and Disposal of Shell Mounds

Impact

PA5a would employ the same dredging and disposal methods proposed under PA1, plus transport of quarry rock from Santa Catalina Island for reef creation as proposed under PA4. A reduced number of barge trips (up to two) would be required for quarry rock transport under this Program Alternative; other vessel needs would remain unchanged. Impacts on land use and recreation would be the same as those identified under PA1 and PA4.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

Program Alternative 5b (PA5b): Artificial Reef at Hazel Site plus Leveling and Spreading Shell Mounds

Impact

PA5b would employ approximately the same operational parameters as PA2, plus artificial reef creation operations similar to those associated with PA4. The reduced size of the proposed reef would result in fewer barge trips (up to two) to transport quarry rock from Santa Catalina Island to the Hazel caisson site. Other vessel needs would remain unchanged. Impacts on land use and recreation would be the same as those identified under PA2 and PA4.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.6 Program Alternative 6 (PA6): Offsite Mitigation

Impact

The provision of global positioning system (GPS) equipment to fishermen would have no impact on land use or recreation. The impacts of habitat restoration at Carpinteria Marsh have been evaluated in conjunction with the approval of that project (SBCFCWCD 2003, SCH 2003021016) and would not be the responsibility of the shell mounds program, which would merely be a source of funding for otherwise unfunded elements. No impacts to land use or recreation are anticipated above those identified in the cited document.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.

3.6.4.7 No Project Alternative

Impact

The No Project Alternative would have no impact on land use or recreational resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

MITIGATION MEASURES

None proposed.